

This three-mile hike to Buzzardroost Rock and back begins at the Buzzardroost sign below the parking lot.

#1 Opened to the public in 1967, Buzzardroost Rock honors Christian and Emma Goetz. Like Lynx Prairie and The Wilderness Preserve, Buzzardroost is a National Natural Landmark.

#2

The abundant grass along the stairs adjacent to the highway is big bluestem. Among the bluestem look for hoary puccoon in spring, and whorled rosinweed and shale barren aster in summer. This small prairie marks the western edge of a once-great prairie that flourished around the town of Lynx. This small town to the east of where you're standing lies in a limestone-rich area whose shallow soils may have persisted with prairie plants even when the old-growth eastern forests dominated. Be careful crossing the highway!

#3

Welcome to the "geologic basement" of the preserve. The Brassfield Limestone bedrock that lines the bottom of Easter Run is the oldest Silurian Age rock represented at The Edge of Appalachia Preserve. Resistant to weathering, this rock forms small falls on the lower slopes of Adams County. An example of this can be seen just downstream along on the trail. Look for ebony jewelwing damselflies on the streamside vegetation in summer.

Sign in box. Please stop to sign in.

#4

You now head upslope through one of Adams County's distinctive Crab Orchard Shale barrens. These slopes, once covered with towering sugar maples and tulip trees, were cleared for farming in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Clearing left these slopes devoid of fertile topsoil, allowing prairie plants to colonize the exposed, clay-heavy Crab Orchard Shale. The shale is highly erodable and low in fertility--only the heartiest of plants can endure its extremes. Look for grooved flax, little bluestem grass, shale barren aster, orange coneflower, and three-awned grass in summer, and into late fall look for the purple flowers of stiff gentian.

#5

Pause in the red cedar dotted opening before your climb. In winter, look back over your shoulder for a view of the Devil's Tea Cup. This Peebles Dolomite spire with a bowl-shaped top marked the early east-west wagon route that is now State Route 125. In summer, look around your feet for tall coreopsis, partridge pea and gray goldenrod. Watch the sky for black and turkey vultures and the occasional red-tailed hawk. Prairie warblers are ubiquitous in spring, when white-eyed vireos are present as well.

#6

You now enter an area dominated by eastern red cedar and Virginia pine, both pioneering species. These trees will be your companions off and on for the next half-mile or so. You'll find showy flower displays in short supply. Instead look for the common sanicle, Virginia creeper, lopseed, white snakeroot, and spice-bush. Sharp-eyed botanists will find the tiny flowers of honeysuckle in early summer. Poison ivy is common, so stay on the trail!

#7

Pause at the remarkable monolith at trail's edge. Long ago, this massive chunk of Peebles Dolomite broke loose from the cliffs above and rolled approximately 100 yards to its present location among the bladdernut shrubs. Look for bulblet fern, columbine, and wild hydrangea clinging to every crevice. Millipedes, camel crickets, bristletails, and mice use the rock cavities for refuge. Above you the limestone-loving blue ash clings to the rock's soil-free side. Listen for the songs of the red-eyed vireo, ovenbird, and Acadian flycatcher in spring. Kentucky warblers call from the logged area behind the rock, but will leave when the forest eventually matures.

#8

You now enter a rock garden with smaller cousins of the stone you just left. The forest is significantly more mature, with sugar maple as the dominant tree. The rocks are surrounded by paw paw shrubs and capped with floral bouquets: rue anemone, columbine, wild ginger, and sicklepod in spring, and zigzag goldenrod in late summer. Early spring mornings here are delightful. Spring migrants such as magnolia and Blackburnian warblers and American redstarts pass through, while breeding birds like wood thrushes and ovenbirds stay to raise young. All these birds compete for your attention against the emerald light and the cathedral-like quality of this forest.

#9

You now begin an ascent in a series of steps and switchbacks. In spring the forest floor is alive with bellworts, wild ginger, mayapple, Solomon's plume, and snakeroot. As the season progresses, note the twining heart-shaped leaves of wild yam. Pileated woodpeckers can be found year-round and, in summer, the whistles of eastern peewees will taunt you as your breathing accelerates on the way up the steep trail. In fall, you may witness a flock of noisy common grackles descend on the chinquapin oaks to feed on the acorns, dropping shells and caps of the half-inch round acorns. In winter, look back and out into the valley—a small glimpse of the spectacular view that awaits you.

Sign Post. Turn right.

#10

Pause at the trail signpost to catch your breath. The Ohio Black Shale below your feet marks the beginning of the acid-loving Appalachian Oak Woodland. Hickories,

several oak species, and sour gum abound. The needle-sharp green spines of the greenbrier, a vine more affectionately known as "shin ripper," adorns the trail's edge, along with sapling sassafras trees. Look for the deeply-furrowed bark of the chestnut oak, an indicator of Ohio Black Shale soils. Downy woodpeckers, nuthatches, vireos and both tanager species travel these ridges. The most common flower is dittany; look for its small purple flowers in late summer.

#11

Pause at the cliff's edge on this lofty ridge and enjoy your first significant view of the Ohio Brush Creek Valley. Don't forget to look down at your feet as well. In late summer you can find mountain rice grass, rare in Ohio, which grows at the cliff's edge along with meadow rue and witch hazel. In spring listen for the melodic song of the hooded warbler.

#12

A footbridge over a chasm welcomes you to Buzzardroost Rock. Turkey vultures often soar around the grassy lookout and perch on the railing. In the broad valley 400 feet below, Ohio Brush Creek flows in a southerly direction. Summer-blooming prairie plants such as whorled milkweed and scaly blazing star adorn the rock. Grasses dominate: look for prairie dropseed, side oats gramma and little bluestem. The Great Plains Muhlenbergia is the most notable grass, recorded in few other Ohio locations. In summer, white flowers of Texas sandwort grace the rock's margin along with the rare dwarf hackberry. The Preserve works daily to ensure that the prairie plants, expansive forested views, and the tree-lined Ohio Brush Creek remain for future generations to enjoy. Turn around and retrace your steps back to the parking lot.